

REMARKS

Claims 1, 4-8 and 10-20 are pending in the present application. As provided in the Office Action, the misnumbered claims (second claim number 28 and claim 29) have been renumbered 29 and 30, respectively. Applicant regrets this typographical error.

Claims 1, 4-8, 10-20 and 28-30 have been rejected as unpatentable under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over U.S. Patent No. 6,534,857 to Morse in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,270,554 to Palmour.

Applicant has provided herewith a Declaration of Ronald Meadows under 37 C.F.R. § 1.131, which explains that Ronald Meadows, the named inventor of the present application, conceived and reduced to practice the subject matter of the present application in the United States prior to November 2, 2001, the filing date of Morse. Accordingly, Applicant submits that Morse is not prior art to the present application, and, accordingly, requests withdrawal of the rejection.

Favorable reconsideration and allowance of this application is respectfully requested in light of the enclosed Declaration. If, in the opinion of the Examiner, a telephonic conference would expedite the examination of this matter, the Examiner is invited to call the undersigned attorney at (919) 854-1400.

Respectfully submitted,

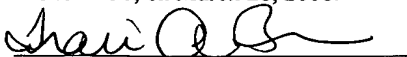


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CERTIFICATE OF MAILING

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as first class mail in an envelope addressed to: Mail Stop Amendment, Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450, on March 28, 2006.


Traci A. Brown